

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

1-12 (Cancelled)

13. (Currently amended) Sealing mat comprising a carrier sheet provided with a multiplicity of sealing elements for sealing test tubes, characterised in that the carrier sheet, on the one hand, and the sealing elements, on the other hand, are made of different materials, ~~such as plastics,~~ and wherein the sealing elements have a peripheral groove, the carrier sheet has openings for receiving the sealing elements, and an edge of an opening made in the carrier sheet is accommodated in the peripheral groove.

14. (Previously presented) Sealing mat according to claim 13, characterised in that the sealing elements are made from a flexible and/or resilient material.

15. (Previously presented) Sealing mat according to claim 13, characterised in that the sealing elements are detachably fixed to the carrier sheet.

16. (Previously presented) Sealing mat according to claim 13, characterised in that the sealing elements are attached to the carrier sheet in such a way that they detach from the carrier sheet when the latter is pulled away, while folding it over towards the rear, after sealing one or more test tubes.

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Currently amended) Sealing mat according to claim ~~17~~ 13, characterised in that the peripheral groove has been made just below the top end of the sealing element.

19. (Currently amended) Sealing mat according to claim ~~17~~ 13, characterised in that the bottom face of the peripheral groove has been continued further in the outward direction than has the top face of

the peripheral groove.

20. (Previously presented) Sealing mat according to claim 13, characterised in that the sealing elements are caps for fitting in the open end of the test tubes.

21. (Previously presented) Sealing mat according to claim 13, characterised in that the sealing elements are made of a chemically resistant material.

22. (Previously presented) Sealing mat according to claim 13, characterised in that the sealing elements are made from a TPE (thermoplastic elastomer), in particular a TPE that can be punctured by a needle.

23. (Previously presented) Sealing mat according to claim 13, characterised in that the carrier sheet is made from a PET (polyethene terephthalate) or PP (polypropylene).

24. (Currently amended) Sealing mat according to claim 13, characterised in that the sealing elements are arranged on the carrier sheet in accordance with a matrix pattern, ~~for example an 8 x 12 matrix pattern.~~

25. (New) Sealing mat according to claim 13, wherein the matrix pattern is an 8 x 12 matrix pattern.

26. (New) Sealing mat according to claim 13, wherein the peripheral groove is defined between an upper limiting surface and a lower limiting surface.

27. (New) Sealing mat comprising a carrier sheet provided with a multiplicity of sealing elements for sealing test tubes, characterised in that the carrier sheet, on the one hand, and the sealing elements, on the other hand, are made of different materials, wherein the sealing elements have a peripheral groove,

the carrier sheet has openings for receiving the sealing elements, an edge of an opening made in the carrier sheet is accommodated in the peripheral groove, and the sealing elements are detachably fixed to the carrier sheet .

28. (New) Sealing mat according to claim 27, characterised in that the sealing elements are made from a flexible and/or resilient material.

29. (New) Sealing mat according to claim 27, characterised in that the sealing elements are attached to the carrier sheet in such a way that they detach from the carrier sheet when the latter is pulled away, while folding it over towards the rear, after sealing one or more test tubes.

30. (New) Sealing mat according to claim 27, characterised in that the peripheral groove has been made just below the top end of the sealing element.

31. (New) Sealing mat according to claim 27, characterised in that the bottom face of the peripheral groove has been continued further in the outward direction than has the top face of the peripheral groove.

32. (New) Sealing mat according to claim 27, characterised in that the sealing elements are caps for fitting in the open end of the test tubes.

33. (New) Sealing mat according to claim 27, characterised in that the sealing elements are made of a chemically resistant material.

34. (New) Sealing mat according to claim 27, characterised in that the sealing elements are made from a TPE (thermoplastic elastomer), in particular a TPE that can be punctured by a needle.

35. (New) Sealing mat according to claim 27, characterised in that the carrier sheet is made from a PET (polyethene terephthalate) or PP (polypropylene).

Appl. No. 09/831,260  
Amdt. Dated December 29, 2003  
Reply to Office action of June 27, 2003

36. (New) Sealing mat according to claim 27, characterised in that the sealing elements are arranged on the carrier sheet in accordance with a matrix pattern.

37. (New) Sealing mat according to claim 36, wherein the matrix pattern is an 8 x 12 matrix pattern.

38. (New) Sealing mat according to claim 27, wherein the peripheral groove is defined between an upper limiting surface and a lower limiting surface.